

Heredities

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My grandfather grew up in Lithuania: I've been reading his legacy of words. The poverty, the cold and the religion. How can you talk about roots, when they are bifurcated and mangled? If you press on a link, you reach the disconnected, reclaim the dispossessed. And so you could say, history is digital.

DNA codes for protein, language codes for the world. But the codes are like illnesses with ambiguous symptoms. If an egg is implanted in an alien mother then the child and the mother don't make biological sense. But so what! When babies are swapped at birth, the parents still think they look like them and like their looks.

Sometimes I follow the whistle of words like a blind woman trusting to her stick. Sometimes I bang shells until they splatter. Always I'm looking backwards at the yoke we beat from the past. Always I'm politically taut, politically equivocal.

There's a secret in most families, a child who doesn't belong. There are memories which seem to thrive upon their difference. When you travel you always take the places back to incubate at home. But my grandfather's past didn't plant my present dreaming.

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